

# **Volunteer Policy**

## **Introduction**

- 1.** VTO is a charity whose purpose is to develop and extend free tutoring and support for school age children in the Greater Glasgow Area who experience disadvantage educationally, socially and economically.
- 2.** VTO is dependent on volunteers for both its management and tutoring provision and has two full-time salaried staff:
  - A Link Worker who is responsible for all aspects of provision of tutoring
  - An Administrative Assistant who is responsible for the operation of the Base/Office
- 3.** The whole focus of VTO is to:
  - Maximise the capabilities and contribution of its Volunteers
  - Ensure its service meets the needs of its clients
  - Seek to identify and provide new skills and ideas
  - Offer opportunity for involvement to as wide a spectrum of the community as possible

## **Principles**

- 1.** VTO's policies of operation are to:
  - Recruit suitable Volunteers on an equal opportunities basis to
    - The Board of Management
    - Its complement of tutors
  - Integrate Volunteers properly into the organisational structure to benefit from their contributions
  - Provide information, initial training, as well as development and extension of skills
  - Offer appropriate care and support for Volunteers
  - Involve Volunteers in work from which they will gain satisfaction and feelings of achieving worthwhile outcomes
- 2.** The roles of the Salaried Staff are clearly defined and cannot be undertaken by Volunteers. Salaried Staff work closely and positively with volunteers at all levels, giving guidance and support and involving them appropriately in their work.

## **Practice Guidelines**

(Information in more detail is to be found in The Volunteers Handbook)

### **1. Recruitment**

In promoting equal opportunities VTO offers the chance of volunteering to adults from all sections of the community who have:

- Sound basic skills of literacy in English and Numeracy
- No impediment under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme

All prospective Volunteers will:

- Receive a recruitment pack consisting of:
  - Information and Policy Statements
  - Application and other forms
- Attend an informal interview to discuss the forms, determine capabilities/interests and finalise enlistment to VTO
- Complete Disclosure Application

## **2. Volunteer Commitment**

Volunteers receive a document defining Commitments which:

- Makes clear the provision made by VTO to them
- Details clearly the role, commitments and specific tasks to be undertaken by them:
  - I. Time for training – 3 x 2 hour sessions
  - II. Time for tuition – 1 x 1 hour per week
  - III. Ability to meet travel commitment

VTO does not regard these documents as a contract since it does not create contracts with its volunteers.

Each Volunteer receives from VTO:

- A Volunteer Policy
- A Volunteer Handbook

Potential volunteers who wish to learn more about VTO before commitment, are invited to attend:

- A Board of Management meeting (Board of Management Member)
- The Office Base for a meeting with the Link Worker (Volunteer Tutor)

If a (potential) volunteer is regarded as unsuitable, a clear indication of the reasons are provided, either verbal or written, on request and a written record is kept e.g.:

- Failure to satisfy the PVG Requirements
- Conviction for a sexual offence or in breach of the Protection of Children Act (2003)

## **3. Expenses**

VTO provides funding to Volunteers for:

- Travelling expenses
- Training costs
- Expenses for lunch if Volunteers work a minimum of 5 hours per day
- The supply of all books and materials from office base.

**N.B.** Volunteers are not expected to provide their own money to support their involvement in tutoring

## **4. Induction and Training**

All Volunteers must participate in:

- A process of induction and initial training consisting of 3 parts
- Consultation regarding other relevant training as desired

VTO supports training needs identified by itself or by its Volunteers  
Volunteers receive a Volunteer Handbook which is featured in the initial training.

## **5. Pairing of Volunteer Tutors with Pupils**

The Link Worker exercises great care in:

- Identifying the needs of pupils
- Matching capabilities of tutors to pupils' needs
- Establishing the circumstances required for tutoring in each home or elsewhere
- Gaining the acceptance of the Volunteer for the pairing
- Involving the Board of Management members in "signing off" the pairings
- Gaining co-operation of schools and teachers

Volunteers have discretion in:

- Accepting a pairing
- Requesting release from an unsuitable pairing

## **6. Communications**

VTO has established a comprehensive system centred in the Office Base for Volunteers to access:

- Telephone
- E-mail
- Website
- Facebook

A Volunteers Newsletter is published on a monthly basis to enable:

- Information supply
- Raising of issues
- Sharing concerns and solutions
- Involving personnel in contributing to VTO

## **7. Support**

The VTO Base is the hub of the organisation and support is available during working hours from the highly skilled support staff:

- Link Worker
- Administrative Assistant

For new tutors an experienced tutor will also be identified as a mentor "buddy" to provide a first point of contact and support.

Volunteers receive regular support to:

- Feedback on progress
- Discuss future development
- Raise difficulties or problems

The communication system affords contacts and support (see Volunteers Handbook). The Volunteers' Handbook is also a resource for providing support

## **8. The Volunteer's Voice**

Volunteers are encouraged to use and take part in the Communications System described in the Volunteers Handbook to express views and raise concerns and make contributions to VTO.

## **9. Insurance**

All Volunteers are covered by the VTO's insurance policy:

- On VTO premises
- While engaged in work on behalf of the VTO

Volunteers who use their own vehicles re VTO activities, should contact their insurance companies to ensure they are covered (usually at no charge).

## **10. Health and Safety and Risk Assessment**

Volunteers are covered by the VTO's Health and Safety Policies which are to be found in the Volunteers Handbook.

In establishing a pairing of tutor and child careful risk assessment is carried out by the Link Worker according to principles in:

- The Volunteer Code of Practice in the Volunteers Handbook
- VTO's Requirements of Parents/Pupils regarding Tutoring

Acceptance of a tutoring placement is at the tutor's discretion

## **11. Equal Opportunities/Anti Discrimination Policies** (see the Volunteers Handbook and Policy Documents)

VTO operates an Equal Opportunities Policy (see Volunteers Handbook) for:

- Salaried Staff
- Volunteers
- Clients

VTO is also an anti-discrimination agency. Consequently discrimination in any form is regarded as completely unacceptable.

All members of VTO must understand and commit to these policies.

## **12. Confidentiality**

VTO deals with children who experience disadvantage. Consequently all members of VTO must exercise strictly the requirements for confidentiality both verbal and written. Sensitive information must be divulged only appropriately on a need to know basis.

## **13. Problems, Difficulties, Discipline**

VTO's policy on problem solving seeks to prevent problems and difficulties through prompt response by staff. If a problem is unresolved, it is referred to the Chairperson and the Board of Management with the agreement of the Volunteer.

The Volunteer Handbook contains VTO's Policy regarding a disciplinary issue with a Volunteer.

#### **14. Volunteers and Benefits**

In certain circumstances the undertaking of the voluntary activities may affect the entitlement to certain Benefits. VTO encourage any Volunteer concerned about this to check with the Benefits Agency to see if this is relevant to them.

#### **15. Endings**

VTO provides a reference, on request, for Volunteers who have served with it for 6 months or more. This reference can be of advantage especially for these entering teaching or work with young people.

All Volunteers, on completion of their volunteer service with VTO receive a letter of appreciation and a certificate of accreditation of the contributions made.

#### **16. VTO has the following separate Policy Statements:**

- Equal Opportunities/Anti-discrimination Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders
- Privacy Policy (Use of Information)